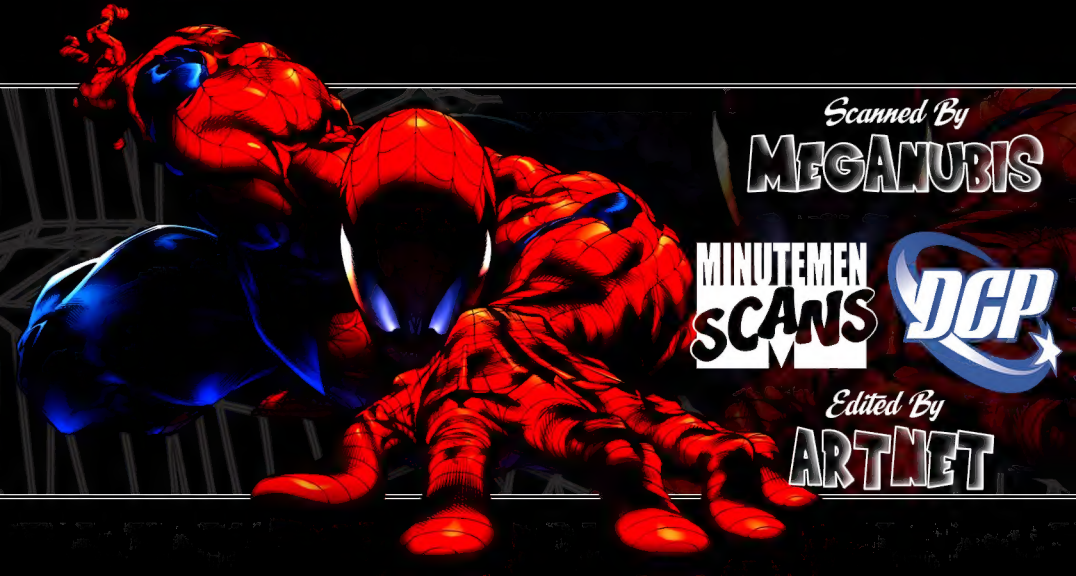
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MY HEAD'S STILL SPINNING FROM THE KNOCKS IT TOOK FROM THE TRAITOR DUKE BLEYS...

...NOW REVEALED AS S'YM, DAEMON OF MALICE AND BETRAYAL.

I HEAR S'YM CACKLING WITH TRIUMPH AS HE FOLDS SPACE AROUND HIM TO MAKE HIS ESCAPE...

YOU'VE PLAYED RIGHT INTO MY MASTER'S HAND, MAGIK!

YOU MANAGED TO UNIFY THE SPLINTER REALMS NOT INTO A STRENGTHENED WHOLE... BUT A SINGLE, CLEAR TARGET!

HA HA HAHA!

AND BY THE OPEN ENCASEMENT, I HEAR AMANDA SEFTON... A WOMAN I ONCE LOVED WITH ALL MY HEART... GASP IN HORROR.

GREAT HADES! NO!

MAGIK™: Vol. 1, No. 04, March, 2001. Published by MARVEL COMICS. Bill Jemas, President; Frank Fochetta, Senior Vice President, Publishing; Joe Quesada, Editor-in-Chief; Stan Lee, Chairman Emeritus. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright © 2001 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $2.99 per copy in the U.S. and $4.50 in Canada. GST#127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. MAGIK (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. MARVEL COMICS is a division of MARVEL ENTERPRISES, INC. Peter Cuneo, Chief Executive Officer; Avi Arad, Chief Creative Officer.

AMANDA SEFTON ONCE LIVED THE UNUSUAL LIFE OF A POWERFUL SORCERESS AND ALLY TO THE UNCANNY X-MEN. BUT NOW, AFTER THE EVENTS OF BLACK SUN, SHE FINDS HERSELF ARMED WITH A MAGICAL SOULSWORD AND STEPPING DISKS, CARRYING ON THE LEGACY OF MAGIK, GUARDIAN OF LIMBO! STAN LEE PRESENTS: MAGIK IN

BOUND FOR DESTRUCTION

MY NAME IS KURT WAGNER, ALSO KNOWN AS **NIGHTCRAWLER** OF THE X-MEN.

AMANDA AND I GO BACK A **LONG WAY.**

WHEN SHE TOOK ON THE GUISE OF **MAGIK**--PROTECTOR OF LIMBO AND GUARDIAN OF THE INTERDIMENSIONAL BORDERS BEYOND THE MORTAL WORLD--I FOUND MYSELF CAUGHT UP IN A **WAR**...

...SOME GREAT MALIGN FORCE WAS CUTTING A SWATHE OF **DESTRUCTION** ACROSS THE SPLINTER REALMS.

AND NOW, SURROUNDED BY A SWIRLING VANGUARD OF RAZOR-SHARP **STORM-FORMS**, IT REACHES THE GATES OF **LIMBO** ITSLEF.

AND WE SEE THE FACE OF THE ARCHENEMY FOR THE FIRST TIME.

DAN ABNETT & ANDY LANNING STORY
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MIKE RAICHT ASSISTANT EDITOR
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YOU *BETRAYED* US, S'YM...FOR WHAT?

THAT NIGHTMARE WILL CONSUME *YOU* ALONG WITH US.

NONSENSE! IT HAS PROMISED TO MAKE ME *RULER* OF LIMBO...

YEAH, *RIGHT.*

YOU THINK SOMETHING LIKE *THAT* IS GOING TO HONOR PACTS AND DEALS? DOES IT LOOK LIKE IT'S GOING TO *NEGOTIATE?*

I... OH, NEVER MIND...

I'LL BE *BACK* FOR YOU, S'YM...

I TELEPORT AFTER AMANDA...

...AS SHE TRANSPORTS HERSELF TO THE UPPER BATTLEMENTS BY ONE OF HER CONVENIENT STEPPING DISKS.

THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE, KURT...

BAMF

...I MUST SOUND THE *HORN OF HARROWING.*

IT IS INTENDED TO BE USED ONLY AT TIMES OF *GREAT PERIL*... AND I THINK THAT TIME IS *NOW.*

IF THIS CREATURE SUCCEEDS IN CONQUERING THE UNITED SPLINTER REALMS, IT WILL BECOME A BEING OF *ABSOLUTE POWER.*

THE VERY THING THE REALMS WERE ORIGINALLY SPLINTERED TO *PREVENT.*

WE SHARE ONE LAST EMBRACE. WE BOTH UNDERSTAND WHAT IS AT STAKE HERE.

THEN SHE SENDS OUT THE CLARION CALL THAT SIGNALS THE LAST STAND.

MAY GOD...

...OR SOMEONE...

...HAVE MERCY ON OUR SOULS.

THE GROUND SHAKES AS THE BASTIONS OF LIMBO DISGORGE THEIR LEGIONS.

DISPARATE DEFENDERS--MANY ANCIENT RIVALS THEMSELVES--ARE DRAWN TOGETHER IN A COOPERATIVE PACT...

...ONE THAT MAY BE THE SALVATION OF ALL CREATION... OR ITS ULTIMATE DOWNFALL.

OVER A BILLION FIGHTING BEINGS CHARGE INTO THE FRAY.

STRIKE, WARRIORS OF THE SPLINTER REALMS! IN THE NAME OF CREATION, STRIKE!

THE ADVERSARY RISES ABOVE THE ALLIED FORCES, ITS LETHAL STORM-FORMS RIPPLING IN THE FIERY WIND...

...AS IF STAYED BY THE SIGHT OF SUCH FORMIDABLE RESISTANCE...

...AND THEN IT BEGINS ITS ONSLAUGHT.

A POWER THAT HAS MELTED HADES AND EXTINGUISHED MUSPELHEIM SEARS INTO LIMBO.

TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DIE IN THE FIRST SECOND.

THEN IT MOVES ON...IMPLACABLE, UNYIELDING, CRUSHING THE WALLS OF LIMBO UNDERFOOT.

IT IS NAMELESS. IT IS AGELESS. IT IS EVIL BEYOND UNDERSTANDING... THE SUM OF ALL FEARS AND MALICE.

YET STILL WE FIGHT TO DENY IT.

I FIND A SPACE ON THE MAIN GATEHOUSE AND TEST MY STEEL AGAINST ITS STORM-FORMS.

THE AIR IS MISTING WITH BLOOD VAPOR.

DORMAMMU AND HIS MINDLESS ONES HOLD THE EASTERN FLANK.

A CYCLONE OF MAGIC ENERGY TEN MILES WIDE SPINS AROUND THEM.

MEPHISTO COMMANDS THE WESTERN DEFENSE.

IS EVEN HE ACCUSTOMED TO SO MANY SCREAMS OF TORTURED ANGUISH AROUND HIM?

VITCHEN, MAGIK'S MOST LOYAL WARRIOR, VANQUISHES A THOUSAND STORM-FORMS BEFORE A BRUTAL WOUND DROPS HIM TO HIS KNEES.

ALLIES! WE MUST *BIND* OUR POWERS ONCE MORE!

WHAT? IT'S ALL WE CAN DO TO *RESIST*, AMANDA!

THE MISTRESS OF LIMBO IS *RIGHT!* WE CAN ONLY HOPE TO DEFEAT THIS ENTITY IF WE *UNDERSTAND* ITS NATURE!

ONE LAST TIME THEN, LORD OF LIES...LET US *FUSE* OUR MAGICAL ARTS INTO *ONE WEAPON!*

W-WHAT POWER I CAN M-MUSTER IS *YOURS*, MISTRESS.

THANK YOU, VITCHEN. THANK YOU *ALL.*

AS *ONE*, NOW! *FOCUS* YOUR EFFORTS...

...FOCUS THEM THROUGH *ME!*

A SPELL RIPS OUT OF AMANDA THEN, A SPELL OF DIVINATION.

*SHE PROBES DIRECTLY INTO THE HEART OF THE BEAST...AND LEARNS AT LAST WHAT IT **TRULY** IS...*

OH GREAT MERCY...

K-KURT...

BAM

AMANDA!

THERE IS NO TIME... THE BATTLE *CAN'T* BE WON HERE...

...IT'S *MY FAULT.* IT'S ALL MY FAULT..

SHE OPENS A GATE FOR ME...

...AND IN A HEARTBEAT, I'M BACK IN THE RAINWASHED STREETS OF NEW YORK.

BAM

NUGENT!

WHAT? WHAT?!

I BURY MY BLADE IN THE HEART OF IT...

THE MACHINE, NUGENT--THE DAMN *MACHINE!*

...AND PRAY BY EVERYTHING I HOLD DEAR THAT IT'S ENOUGH.

AMANDA HAD NUGENT BUILD THIS DEVICE AS A REPOSITORY OF ALL MAGICAL KNOWLEDGE.

SHE CHOSE EARTH AS ITS BASE BECAUSE IT WAS FREE OF AMBIENT MAGICAL BACKGROUND.

SHE NEVER REALIZED THAT THIS ARCANE PANDORA'S BOX MIGHT EVOLVE...

...MIGHT DRAW TOGETHER ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THE VAST ELDRITCH DATA CONTAINED WITHIN IT...

...MIGHT BECOME SOMETHING ELSE.

THE ARCHENEMY IS THE OFFSPRING OF THIS MACHINE, AN ABSOLUTE FORCE OF MAGICAL EVIL...

...RETURNING FROM THE FAR FUTURE TO CONQUER AND SAFEGUARD THE TIME OF ITS BIRTH.

I WATCH AS IT SPLITS OPEN ALONG THE GOUGES MY SWORD CUTS IN IT.

I WATCH AS A MAELSTROM OF ENERGY SPILLS OUT.

IN LIMBO, THE ARCHENEMY FALTERS, AS IF WEAKENED.

AND BEFORE IT CAN RENEW ITS ASSAULT...

...MAGIK AND HER SOULSWORD ARE THERE.

AND THEN ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.
LITERALLY.

THEY SAY LIMBO MAY BURN FOR WEEKS.

IT MIGHT JUST TAKE THAT LONG TO BURY THE DEAD.

ONE BY ONE, THE STRANGE ALLIES TAKE THEIR LEAVE...

IT'S BEEN AN...*EDUCATION*, MISTRESS OF LIMBO.

NOT AN EXPERIENCE I'D CHOOSE TO REPEAT, DORMAMMU, BUT *THANK YOU.*

FAREWELL, GUARDIAN. I HAVE A *REALM* TO REMAKE.

HAVE A CARE WHERE YOUR AMBITIONS TAKE YOU NEXT TIME.

MEPHISTO'S *RIGHT*, KURT.

I ONLY HAD NUGENT BUILD THAT BLASTED MACHINE BECAUSE I THOUGHT A COMPREHENSIVE *MAGICAL DATABASE* WOULD AID MY TASK HERE.

IN TRYING TO DO MY NEW JOB WELL, I ALMOST *DESTROYED* CREATION.

RECOGNIZING YOUR OWN MISTAKES AND PUTTING THEM RIGHT IS THE *GREATEST TALENT* A LEADER CAN HAVE, AMANDA.

AND AS FOR THE REST... THE COURAGE, THE TENACITY, THE AUTHORITY...YOU'VE *NOTHING* TO PROVE.

IN *MY* OPINION, FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

...THE CROSSROADS OF LIMBO AND THE REALMS IT GUARDS COULDN'T BE IN *SAFER HANDS.*

KNOW WHAT, FUZZY ELF?

YOU KNOW *EXACTLY* WHAT TO SAY TO MAKE A GIRL *SMILE.*

END.